

Message Text

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ACTION VO-03

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 FBIE-00 INSE-00 NSAE-00

SCA-01 L-02 INR-07 PRS-01 /027 W
----- 053792

R 161047Z MAY 75

FM AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3238

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

USIA WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L BUDAPEST 1449

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: CVIS, PINS, HU (SZELENYI, IVAN)

SUBJ: IMMIGRANT VISA CASE OF HUNGARIAN INTELLECTUAL

REF: BUDAPEST 1264 AND PREVIOUS (NOTAL)

1. SUMMARY: AFTER SEVERAL MONTHS OF APPARENT VACILLATION, HUNGARIAN PASSPORT OFFICE INFORMED SZELENYI MAY 15 THAT HE AND HIS FAMILY WOULD BE GRANTED PASSPORT FOR EMIGRATION. FOLLOWING IS BACKGROUND SZELENYI PROVIDED EMBASSY OFFICER. END SUMMARY.

2. SZELENYI HAD BEEN WRITING TO HUNGARIAN INTERIOR MINISTER EACH MONTH INQUIRING ABOUT STATUS OF HIS CASE AND GETTING NO RESPONSE. HE ALSO WROTE FREQUENTLY BUT IN VAIN TO POLITBURO MEMBERS MIKLOS OVARI AND GYORGY ACZEL. HAVING GIVEN UP ON OVARI AND ACZEL, SZELENYI WROTE LETTER DIRECTLY TO PARTY FIRST SECRETARY KADAR ON MAY 2. HUNGARIAN NOVELIST GYORGY KONRAD, A CLOSE ASSOCIATE OF SZELENYI, WROTE SEPARATE LETTER TO KADAR ON SZELENYI'S BEHALF. (KONRAD, WHO HAD PREVIOUSLY PLANNED TO EMIGRATE BUT ACHIEVED A MODUS VIVENDI WITH REGIME DURING WINTER, ACCUSED HUNGARIAN OFFICIALS OF USING KONRAD'S DECISION NOT TO EMIGRATE AS A PRESSURE TACTIC AGAINST SZELENYI. KONRAD'S LETTER, ACCORDING SZELENYI, HAS BEEN PUBLISHED IN LE MONDE.)

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3. ON MAY 8 SZELENYI WAS SUMMONED TO PASSPORT OFFICE WHERE UNIDENTIFIED OFFICIAL INFORMED HIM THAT HIS APPLICATION HAD BEEN REFUSED. OFFICIAL SAID HUNGARIAN LAW PERMITS EMIGRATION ONLY TO JOIN RELATIVES. WENT ON TO SAY, HOWEVER, THAT HUNGARIAN GOVERNMENT DOES NOT WISH TO "DESTROY" SZELENYI AND WOULD BE WILLING LET HIM TRAVEL TO U.S. OR UK FOR YEAR OR SO OF WORK AND STUDY, LEAVING HIS FAMILY BEHIND IN HUNGARY. SZELENYI REFUSED SIGN SUCH AN AGREEMENT. INSTEAD, HE WROTE LETTER TO CHIEF OF PASSPORT OFFICE, EXPRESSING HIS DISAGREEMENT WITH OFFICIAL'S CONCEPT OF EMIGRATION LAW, STATING (CORRECTLY) THAT LAW PERMITS ANYONE TO EMIGRATE AT DISCRETION OF INTERIOR MINISTER. SAID THAT, IF APPLICATION FORMALLY REFUSED, HE WOULD CONSIDER IT VIOLATION OF HIS BASIC HUMAN RIGHTS. ASSERTED THAT NO CIVILIZED GOVERNMENT WOULD IN EFFECT USE SMALL CHILDREN AS HOSTAGES. STATED THAT IF WITHIN TWO WEEKS HE DID NOT RECEIVE PERMISSION TO LEAVE, HE WOULD MAKE HIS CASE PUBLIC. SZELENYI ALSO WROTE ADDITIONAL LETTERS AT THIS TIME TO KADAR AND INTERIOR MINISTER, POLITELY STRESSING HUMAN RIGHTS ASPECT OF HIS CASE.

4. ON MAY 15 PASSPORT OFFICE AGAIN SUMMONED SZELENYI AND SAME OFFICIAL ADVISED HIM THAT APPLICATION WOULD BE GRANTED. PASSPORT WOULD BE FORTHCOMING IN FEW DAYS AND FAMILY MUST THEN LEAVE HUNGARY "IMMEDIATELY". ADVISED HIM THAT HE WOULD BE DOCUMENTED FOR "PERMANENT EMIGRATION". WHILE OFFICIAL SAID THIS WOULD NOT AUTOMATICALLY STRIP SZELENYI OF CITIZENSHIP, HE GAVE HIM APPLICATION FORMS FOR FORMAL RENUNCIATION. (EMBASSY SUSPECTS THAT SZELENYI WILL BE ISSUED "EMIGRATION" PASSPORT (KIVANDORLO) WHICH REQUIRES VISA FOR RE-ENTRY INTO HUNGARY AND IS USUALLY GIVEN ONLY TO CHILDREN WHO ARE SEVERING ALL TIES WITH COUNTRY, RATHER THAN MORE FAMILIAR "CONSULAR" PASSPORT WHICH ALSO REQUIRES ENDORSEMENT FOR RETURN TO HUNGARY BUT WHICH ENABLES HOLDER TO ENJOY RIGHTS OF HUNGARIAN CITIZENS WHILE ABROAD.)

5. BARRING FURTHER TWISTS OR TURNS, SZELENYI EXPECTS RECEIVE PASSPORT AND DEPART HUNGARY IN ABOUT TWO WEEKS.
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HE HAS DECIDED FOR PRACTICAL REASONS TO PROCEED FIRST TO UK, FOR WHICH HE WILL HAVE IMMIGRANT VISA, AND TO STAY IN LONDON AT LEAST FEW MONTHS. HE HAS NUMBER OF FRIENDS, FINANCIAL RESOURCES, AND JOB OFFER THERE. HOWEVER, HE BELIEVES HE WILL ULTIMATELY WISH TO EMIGRATE TO U.S. WE ASSURED HIM EMBASSY LONDON COULD PROCESS HIS VISA CASE TO CONCLUSION AT APPROPRIATE TIME. SZELENYI EXPRESSED HIS DEEP APPRECIATION FOR SYMPATHETIC AND

EXPEDITIOUS MANNER IN WHICH EMBASSY AND DEPT HAVE
HANDLED HIS CASE.

6. FOR LONDON: SZELENYI IS INTERNATIONALLY KNOWN
SOCIOLOGIST, FORMER FORD FOUNDATION SCHOLAR AT COLUMBIA,
WHO WAS ARRESTED LAST FALL ALONG WITH NOVELIST KONRAD
FOR ALLEGED DISSIDENT ACTIVITIES. THEY WERE SUBSEQUENTLY
RELEASED AND TOLD THEY WOULD BE ALLOWED TO EMIGRATE.
AS NOTED ABOVE, KONRAD EVENTUALLY DECIDED REMAIN HERE.
SZELENYI PERSISTED AND ABOVE IS RESULT. SZELENYI AND
FAMILY HAVE BEEN FOUND QUALIFIED FOR NON-PREFERENCE
STATUS. UPON SZELENYI'S DEPARTURE FROM HUNGARY, WILL
FORWARD HIS ENTIRE VISA FILE.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: EMIGRANTS, VISAS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 16 MAY 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: MorefiRH
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975BUDAPE01449
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750173-0291
From: BUDAPEST
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750542/aaaablhf.tel
Line Count: 129
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION VO
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 BUDAPEST 1264
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: MorefiRH
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 30 JUN 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: WITHDRAWN <10 Jun 2003 by MorefiRH, INA>; RELEASED <30 JUN 2003 by MorefiRH>; APPROVED <30 JUN 2003 by MorefiRH>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: IMMIGRANT VISA CASE OF HUNGARIAN INTELLECTUAL
TAGS: CVIS, PINS, HU, (SZELENYI, IVAN)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006